

I. WINSLOW AYER.

MAY 16, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MESICK, from the Committee on War Claims, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 5748.]

The Committee on War Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 5748) for the relief of I. Winslow Ayer, submit the following report:

It is in evidence that the claimant was educated at Harvard University, Boston, Mass., and duly graduated in medicine and surgery and for many years was well known in authorship and journalism; that for more than two years from and after the breaking out of the war the claimant, without any charge or aid, to or from any source, recruited for the Union Army in various localities at his own expense, and in one instance paid a large bounty to secure an enlistment. His patriotism and zeal could not have been surpassed. In 1861 the claimant with his family resided in Kentucky, where in 1862 he became aware of the presence of a secret, sworn, treasonable organization, "Knights of the Golden Circle," having membership in the State and rapidly extending into adjoining States. Its design was subversion of the Government of the United States, the establishment of a northwestern Confederacy, and aid of the public enemy. In Chicago, July, 1864, there were three entire regiments of "Sons of Liberty," and in the State of Illinois 100,000 men in the order.

These facts were known to the claimant but were a secret to the Government officials in the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois.

The claimant, upon counsel with United States Senator I. N. Arnold, of Chicago, hastened to Springfield, Ill., and imparted the facts to Governor Yates. Having convinced the governor of the magnitude of the organization, he was urged to push his investigations to the utmost, being assured by the governor that he should receive Government recognition and reward.

Claimant, feeling that he had fully discharged his duty, declined to go further as a civilian, assuring the governor that the efforts of a mere detective would be almost certain to fail.

The claimant stated that if provided with a military commission of suitable rank he would give his best efforts to the work.

Governor Yates fully acquiesced in this request and promised the commission of colonel. The claimant accepted the assurance of the governor, who then gave him a letter to Brig. Gen. Halbert E. Paine, then in command of the district of Illinois, and to General Paine he reported for duty on or about July 1, 1864.

He was immediately placed in communication with Col. B. J. Sweet, commanding Camp Douglass, but recognized Major-General Hooker and Brigadier-General Paine as his superior officers and reported directly to them.

The affidavits of several Government officers and other reputable citizens are hereto attached showing the character and value of the services rendered by Mr. Ayer.

Affidavit of James H. Keeler, of Chicago.

I, James H. Keeler, on oath, depose and say that I am personally acquainted with Dr. I. Winslow Ayer. I first knew him in 1864. He was a property holder in Chicago, Ill., and was, I believe, very prosperous in business, having a large, rapidly increasing, and lucrative practice as a physician. I learned that said Ayer was engaged in the service of the Government, in investigating designs and plots of secret treasonable organizations. I remember that certain arrests of alleged conspirators were made in Chicago early in November, 1864, and that said Ayer was a witness for the Government. Soon after that time I learned that said Ayer's professional practice was ruined by his connection with the conspiracy service, and I know that he was in financial distress at the time. As a real estate agent, I sold his house and lot for him, which he occupied at the time of the sale for his family residence, and I think the most of the money resulting from the sale went to his creditors and claimants.

I always regarded the said Ayer as a gentleman of excellent character, and I believe that the ruin of his business and loss of his property was due to the popular feeling against him in consequence of the nature of his services concerning the conspiracy, preventing his success in business and seriously affecting his standing and good repute as a citizen. It is my opinion that the community believed said Ayer had abandoned his profession for the calling of a common detective, or that he had betrayed his fellow-conspirators to save himself from their fate, and hence the state of popular feeling was adverse to success in the practice of his profession as a physician, and damaging to his reputation as an honorable gentleman.

JAMES H. KEELER,
Chicago, Ill.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23d day of July, A. D. 1889.

[SEAL.]

F. HOFFMANN, *Notary Public.*

CHICAGO, May 10, 1865.

DEAR SIR: Constant and pressing engagements have prevented my acknowledging at an earlier day my appreciation of the great service you have rendered the country.

I remember that last summer you called upon me and stated your belief in the existence of a widespread conspiracy, having its agents, some of them, in our very city. So startling were your disclosures that it was difficult to believe that anything so infamous could exist. Subsequent events and the terrible tragedy, developing such fiend-like atrocity at Washington, have shown that we were all too slow in guarding against traitors and their barbarous plots. My intercourse with you impressed me with your sincerity and patriotism and sincere desire to serve the country. For the courage, vigilance, and activity you have displayed you are entitled to the gratitude of the people. Your assistant, Robert Alexander, I have known for several years, and always regarded him as a most active and efficient man, of great skill as an officer. Both of you are, in my judgment, well entitled to the favor of the Government.

Very respectfully, yours,

ISAAC N. ARNOLD, M. C.

Dr. I. WINSLOW AYER.

Affidavit of W. H. Rand, of Rand, McNally & Co., publishers, Chicago.

I, William H. Rand, of Chicago, Ill., do on oath depose and say that I know Dr. I. Winslow Ayer; that during the early part of the summer of 1861 said Ayer informed me that he had obtained information which convinced him that a dangerous and widespread conspiracy existed in Chicago and throughout the State of Illinois, and in certain other States, having for its purpose the causing of a rebellion in the North against the Government of the United States, and that it included in its designs the pillage and destruction of Chicago, and simultaneous release of all prisoners of war in Camp Douglas and all the Northern prisons, and that he felt it his duty to inform the authorities of the facts, and asked my advice as to the proper way to do so. I gave him a letter of introduction to Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, Member of Congress, residing in Chicago, and advised said Ayer to communicate all the information to said Arnold. Later, I learned of the exposure to the Government of plots of conspirators and of the arrest, trial, and conviction of persons for conspiring to release the prisoners of war in Camp Douglas, and to lay waste and destroy the city of Chicago in the manner first stated to me by said Ayer. In my acquaintance with said Ayer I ever regarded him as a gentleman of excellent character, education, and culture, and a sincere and zealous patriot. I have no doubt that but for his timely and efficient services for the Government the terrible plots of the treasonable organization would have been executed. The facts above stated are well remembered by me.

W. H. RAND.

COOK COUNTY, State of Illinois, ss:

Sworn to and acknowledged before me, Robert B. Martin, notary public, Cook County, State of Illinois, June 14, 1889.

[SEAL.]

ROBERT B. MARTIN,
Notary Public.

Affidavit of Col. L. L. Wilson, of Chicago, Ill.

I, L. L. Wilson, of Chicago, Ill., on oath, depose and say that I am well acquainted with Dr. I. Winslow Ayer; that I first knew him in Chicago in 1864 as a physician, having a very extensive, rapidly increasing, and lucrative practice. He was then and ever since has been a gentleman of irreproachable character.

During the summer of 1864 I was a patient in his office, and on one occasion said Ayer stated to me that he had become possessed of information of the gravest character and highest importance to the United States Government; that in early time it would be known to the public and would startle the community, especially in Chicago; that it related to certain plots against the Government. Early in November, 1864, many persons were arrested in Chicago charged with conspiring to release the prisoners of war in Camp Douglas and to pillage and burn the city of Chicago. The alleged conspirators were tried by a military commission in Cincinnati, Ohio, and several of them convicted and sentenced.

Among the many witnesses of the Government was Dr. I. Winslow Ayer, the party aforesaid. No sooner had he given his testimony than he was denounced by the Chicago Times newspaper as a spy and informer, and by great numbers of persons in Chicago as a traitor to his brethren, who had given evidence against them to save himself from prosecution, and by other persons he was called a detective.

The obloquy and hatred of said Ayer by the general public, for the reason above stated, was so great that his medical practice was destroyed. He received threatening letters, and at one time an attempt was made upon his life, he being fired upon by some unknown party in the nighttime, on his own premises, two bullets passing in close proximity to his head, an account of which was published in the Chicago Evening Journal newspaper.

The bitterness of feeling against said Ayer was further intensified by the comments of Lawyer Hervey, one of the counsel for the prisoners before the military commission in Cincinnati, in the winter of 1864-65, a report of which was published in the journals of the day, in which report appeared the following words, viz: "Some two hundred years ago there was a man in England who swore away the lives of his fellow-citizens by wholesale. His name was Dr. Titus Oates, the man who got up what was called the popish plot, and by perjury and villainy consigned many an innocent head to the scaffold. He was assisted by a man who has, as no other judge has, disgraced the ermine—Jeffries, who drank himself to death in the tower, where his coworker in iniquities and evil deeds, with dreadful and condign punishment, followed him.

"The effort of nature to produce so great a monster was so terrible that it required a resting spell of two hundred years before she could produce another such monster in the shape of Dr. I. Winslow Ayer."

Said Ayer's medical practice was destroyed, his good name defamed, and in peril of assassination he was compelled to remove from Chicago and go elsewhere to provide for his family and himself. The popular animosity in Chicago against said Ayer was, in my opinion, due to the fact that he was not protected with an officer's commission, and was supposed to have acted in the matter as a private citizen and from base motives.

Not until the protracted trial in Cincinnati was ended, and the verdict rendered, was the fact generally recognized by the community in Chicago that a conspiracy against the country and against Chicago had existed.

I had, early in the summer of 1864, been informed by said Ayer of the character of the services he was then rendering the Government, and I have reason to believe that it was in consequence of said Ayer's services that the formidable conspiracy of the "Sons of Liberty" was broken up.

L. L. WILSON.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12th day of June, A. D. 1889.

D. S. BOLKCOM, *Notary Public.*

NEW YORK, June 26, 1889.

DEAR SIR: Your favors of the 10th and 23d instants were duly received. The facts about which you desired me to give my affidavit had largely passed from my memory, and before I could make oath to them I was compelled to go back and look up records and memoranda so as to refresh my recollection. This, together with the exacting duties of professional work, have caused delay.

Inclosed I send you the affidavit with some few verbal alterations and immaterial changes.

I regret to learn that the world has not gone well with you, and trust that you may be successful in receiving recognition and substantial compensation for the good work which you did for the Government in 1864.

There are no expenses or charges connected with the matter so far as I am concerned.

Yours, very truly,

HENRY L. BURNETT.

I. WINSLOW AYER, *Milton, Mich.*

Affidavit of Gen. H. L. Burnett, judge-advocate.

I, Henry L. Burnett, of the city, county, and State of New York, on oath do depose as follows, viz:

That during the autumn of 1864 I became acquainted with Dr. I. Winslow Ayer, in Chicago, said Ayer having been introduced to me by Col. B. J. Sweet, commanding the post-Camp Douglas, and commended by said Sweet as being engaged in the service of the Government in the investigation of the treasonable plots and designs of the so-called "Sons of Liberty," a secret, sworn, treasonable organization existing in Indiana, Illinois, and elsewhere. I was judge-advocate of the military commission held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the winter of 1864-65, for the trial of St. Leger Grenfel, Charles Walsh, Richard T. Semmes, and others, who were arrested in the city of Chicago, Ill., November 6, 1864, on a charge of conspiring to liberate the prisoners of war in Camp Douglas, and to lay waste and destroy the city of Chicago. During the trial, which occupied several weeks, I was most favorably impressed with the loyalty and efficiency of said Ayer. The accused—Grenfel, Walsh, and Semmes—were convicted upon all the charges and specifications of the indictment and severally sentenced.

On more than one occasion I have heard Colonel Sweet express commendation of said Ayer and the services he had rendered the Government; and the evidence of all the witnesses for the Government convinced me that there had existed a most extensive and formidable secret treasonable organization in Chicago and elsewhere, which, had its designs and plots not been timely disclosed to the Government, would have caused great disaster to the city of Chicago and the country, and I believe that the said Ayer rendered valuable services to the Government in investigating and disclosing the said treasonable plots. While I was in Washington, in discharge of my duties as judge-advocate of the military commission engaged in the trial of the assassins of President Lincoln, I received a letter from said Ayer giving certain important information which led me to reply that "in my opinion the accursed treasonable order 'Sons of Liberty' had much to do with bringing into existence the state of feeling the venomous bitterness of which had culminated in the assassination of Mr. Lincoln."

From the testimony given before the military commission convened for the trial of the Indiana conspirators and military commission at Cincinnati, I was convinced that in 1864 there existed in certain Northern States, as well as in the border States, a widespread conspiracy to actively aid the rebels in arms against the Government, which was virtually broken up by the action of the Government in the arrest, trial, and conviction of the conspirators in Indianapolis and the Chicago conspirators at Cincinnati, and that the timely information given to the authorities by said Ayer was of great value and importance to the Government. I was impressed from first to last, in my acquaintance with said Ayer, that he was zealous and patriotic and discharged his duties to the Government in a skillful and prudent manner.

I attach hereto an original letter from General Sweet, marked with my initials (H. L. B.), received by me while engaged in the trial of these Chicago conspirators, which bears upon this subject.

New York City, June 26, 1889.

[SEAL.]

HENRY L. BURNETT.

THOS. B. EDELL,
New York County.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, May 26, 1865.

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 16th instant. The evidence in the assassination cases is closed on the part of the Government. It would not have been possible in this trial to have entered upon the investigation indicated in your letter. I have no doubt but that that accursed treasonable order of the "S. O. L." had much to do with the bringing into existence the state of feeling—the venomous bitterness—which culminated in the assassination of Mr. Lincoln.

If Colonel Sweet does not desire to publish my argument in those cases at Cincinnati, of course I have no objection to your doing it. Mr. Pitman informed me that the manuscript was sent him some time ago.

I think these cases now on hand will close next week. Until then I am buried under a crushing load of work.

Yours, ever, for the good cause,

H. L. BURNETT.

DR. I. WINSLOW AYER, *Chicago, Ill.*

Certificate of Col. B. J. Sweet.

HEADQUARTERS, POST CAMP DOUGLAS,
Chicago, Ill., May 9, 1865.

I hereby certify that Dr. I. Winslow Ayer, of Chicago, Ill., from and after the 1st day of July, 1864, up to the 1st day of January, 1865, furnished information concerning the general nature, character, and purposes of the "Sons of Liberty," as developed in the meetings of the local branch of that order, and the statements of its members at Chicago, Ill., by written reports to me.

Very respectfully submitted.

B. J. SWEET,
Brevet Brigadier-General, Commanding Post.

JACKSONVILLE, ILL., May 6, 1865.

DEAR SIR: Yours of April 29 is just before me, on my return from Springfield. I will only say just now you are entitled to the greatest consideration and highest gratitude of the people for your conduct in bringing to light the dangerous conspiracy, and it is very strange that due credit has not been given you long ago. I have wondered why your agency in the matter has been kept so still. The most pressing duties have kept me from watching the progress of the trials and parties who have been connected therewith. Mr. Arnold and I can say much for your effective agency in the premises.

In haste, truly, yours,

RICHARD YATES.

I. WINSLOW AYER, M. D.

JACKSONVILLE, ILL., May 20, 1865.

DEAR SIR: It affords me great gratification to know of the successful completion of your perilous and most difficult undertaking. When you called on me in Springfield last July, and stated your conviction that there was a dangerous conspiracy

in our State, I felt it my duty to express an earnest desire to learn the truth, thereby the better to protect the public interest, and when I introduced you to Brigadier-General Paine it was with fullest confidence that the work was in the right hands. It was indeed a delicate and responsible trust, the faithful execution of which might imperil even life itself, and had the work been confided to a person of less patriotism, prudence, firmness, perception, and ability than yourself, the investigation would have been futile and the disaster would probably have been precipitated. It was, I know, painful in the extreme for you to have been regarded even for a time as a Copperhead, but your friends—and they are all loyal men—know that you entered the organization from the most commendable motives, and your countrymen will do you justice.

I have been apprised by your letter that Mr. Robert Alexander united his efforts with yours, and that his services have contributed to complete success in breaking up this organized band of traitors. You will express to Mr. Alexander my deep sense of gratitude for the noble and fearless part he has taken.

Our countrymen will ever appreciate the service you have rendered. It is too apparent to all thinking men even to require special remark, that, had you not foiled those desperate conspirators at the very moment you did, an irreparable disaster to our glorious cause would doubtless have ensued, for with thousands of released rebels and their numerous treasonable allies in our midst, who can estimate the extent of the crimes they would have perpetrated. Those who write the history of this struggle through which we have passed and record the names of men who have rendered efficient aid to our country, will not forget the noble self-sacrificing task of yourself and your assistant, Mr. Robert Alexander.

Very respectfully,

RICHARD YATES.

DR. I. WINSLOW AYER.

HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN DEPARTMENT,

Chicago, May 3, 1865.

DEAR SIR: Now that the trial before the military commission in Cincinnati is closed, I have the pleasure, as it is my duty, to express to you, in behalf of myself and our country, my sincere thanks for the very great service you have rendered the Government.

It was you, I believe, who first apprised the authorities of the existence of the formidable plots which, but for your timely discovery, would doubtless have been attended with great disaster to the General Government and would have resulted in the destruction of your city; indeed, it is not easy to calculate the evils which would have resulted in the culmination of the plots of our secret enemy.

Your dispatches from the hour of your entering the organization of traitors till the breaking up of their leagues were of immense importance to the Government. I cheerfully acknowledge your promptness in furnishing reports to the brigadier-general commanding the district of Illinois and to the commandant of the post at Chicago, and your concurrence with that officer in this period of most imminent peril. I was early apprised of the fact that Mr. R. Alexander had at your request entered upon the hazardous undertaking with you, and your dispatches have ever recorded his valuable aid. To him my heartfelt thanks are due in behalf of myself and our country.

No one can more fully appreciate than myself the value of such services, and all loyal men will join me in an expression of gratitude to you. Your duties have been fearlessly and honorably performed, and loyal men in whatever section of the country will acknowledge your services as among the most important and perilous of the war, and your fellow-citizens in Chicago can not but regard you as the person who by timely information warded off the destruction of that city. To your meritorious acts and motives this acknowledgment is justly due and cheerfully accorded.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HOOKER,
Major-General, Commanding.

DR. I. WINSLOW AYER.

Affidavit of Post Adjutant Shurly.

E. R. P. Shurly, late assistant adjutant-general, Camp Douglass, Ill., having been duly sworn, deposes and says that during the summer and autumn of 1864 he was on duty at Camp Douglas, Chicago, Ill.—that post being under command of Col. B. J. Sweet, Eighth Regiment, V. R. C.—as post adjutant, and in the discharge

of that duty was well informed of the transactions at headquarters and the condition of the camp. About November 1, 1864, we held as prisoners of war, including Morgan's command, about 13,000 men. The garrison consisted of about 500 officers and men, a number wholly inadequate to safely guard the prisoners and repel an attack from an armed enemy from the outside. The garrison could not be used to protect the city of Chicago in the event of an attack by an armed enemy. He often saw I. Winslow Ayer, M. D., at the camp and was aware that he was acting in the interest of the Government; knew that he had frequent interviews with Colonel Sweet. He transmitted written reports to him concerning a secret treasonable organization; that upon several occasions he had received these reports; they were of great importance and value to the Union cause; had frequently heard Colonel Sweet speak of the important service rendered the Government by said Ayer and commend his courage and intelligence; that he believes the course taken by Dr. Ayer in the matter caused him heavy pecuniary loss; that he knew of the arrest of many persons in Chicago on the night of November 6, 1864, for conspiring against the Government and to release the prisoners of war and destroy Chicago.

By directions of Colonel Sweet, he issued orders for the seizure of arms, stored in places adjacent to Camp Douglas; large numbers of muskets, pistols, carbines, guns, with an immense quantity of ammunition, was captured. Dr. Ayer rendered the Government the most valuable service in timely warning said Sweet of the plots of the conspirators operating in Chicago; furthermore, that he is entitled to the consideration of the Government for the valuable services rendered at the risk of his life.

E. R. P. SHURLY,
Late Assistant Adjutant-General, Camp Douglas, Ill.,
Brevet Captain and First Lieutenant, U. S. A.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 5th day of August, 1889.

HENRY WULFF,
Clerk County Court.

Affidavit of Charles W. Ayer.

I, Charles W. Ayer, on oath depose and say, that in the years 1863 and 1864 I was assistant bookkeeper and corresponding clerk in the office of Dr. I. Winslow Ayer. In pursuance of my duties, I knew the affairs of the office of said Ayer in every detail of finance. I know that during the year 1863 the income of Dr. I. Winslow Ayer from the practice of his profession was considerably over \$9,000. The first six months of the following year made even a better proportionate exhibit, but the last six months of that year the receipts were very light, scarcely enough to defray the incidental expenses, which fact was, in my opinion, owing to the almost constant absence of said Ayer from his office.

Both I and E. N. Tucker, head bookkeeper, remonstrated with said Ayer concerning his neglect of his profession, to which said Ayer replied that he was engaged in the service of the Government, which demanded his closest and constant attention, and if it cost him his business, his property, and his life he would not abandon nor neglect the work for which he was engaged, and which was of the greatest importance. I did not then know the nature of his duties in detail, but later learned that he was investigating a formidable conspiracy against the Government. I often saw him give sealed dispatches to the orderly or messenger of Col. B. J. Sweet, commandant of Camp Douglas. Colonel Sweet was often in the office and occasionally called at the residence of said Ayer, and said Ayer went almost daily to Camp Douglas.

After the arrest of conspirators in Chicago, in November, 1864, I saw one J. L. Rock, in the office of said Ayer, and heard him ask said Ayer "who had betrayed the order to the authorities," and added, "If it was you, better a thousand times be Charley Walsh than Dr. Ayer." During the progress of the trial of the conspirators by the military commission in Cincinnati, and before said Ayer had gone to Cincinnati to testify, one evening as he returned from Camp Douglas, and was stepping from his carriage in his carriage house, two bullets were discharged from a revolver or other firearm, by some unknown party on the outside of the building, both bullets lodging in an upright oaken support in a direct line of said Ayer's head. The discharge of the shots was heard by me and by the family of said Ayer. I extracted both bullets from the oaken upright.

The said Ayer went to Cincinnati and testified as a witness for the Government. Several leading conspirators were convicted, and among them the aforesaid Charles Walsh. After the said Ayer had testified before the military commission his professional business almost ceased, and notwithstanding expenditures and efforts upon

his part to reestablish his business it was ruined, and said Ayer was obliged to leave Chicago in his efforts to obtain support for his family, and became reduced to poverty. His homestead had been sold, and every dollar resulting from such sale was paid to his creditors; his horses, all his furniture, even to his and his wife's personal property, were all sacrificed to satisfy his debts and in fruitless efforts to establish his practice in his profession. Wherever he went he was pursued by anonymous threatening letters, and for a long time this form of annoyance and persecution was continued until he left the State, and without a home or any resources whatever. I have not a doubt that the ruin of said Ayer's business and loss of property was solely due to the nature of his services for the Government, unsupported by any commission or warrant, in consequence of which said Ayer was held in public esteem as a detective or State's evidence against his comrades in treason to insure his own safety. No public recognition of his real character or motives has ever been made by the Government, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

CHARLES W. AYER.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 22d day of July, 1889.

ROBT. CASEMENT,

Notary Public for the County of Genesee, State of Michigan.

HEADQUARTERS NORTHERN DEPARTMENT,

Cincinnati, Ohio, December 21, 1864.

SIR: I am directed by the major-general commanding the department to acknowledge your letter of December 16, and to state in answer that no one appreciates more than himself the value of your services to the country during the last few months, and no one will do more to have you satisfactorily remunerated; the only question in his mind being the mode of doing it. In his opinion it will be no use to apply for a commission, as you suggest, as there is no reasonable cause for supposing that it will be granted. The medical staff is organized with a view to the wants of the Army professionally, and the authorities under the law, in my judgment, confer commissions only on those persons it designs shall render medical service. What is true of the medical department is equally so with the other branches of the staff. The General does not know of a single instance in the history of the Government in which commissions have been given for services rendered outside of the department.

A better way for you to be remunerated will be to make out an account against the Government for the time you have been serving it, and have Colonel Sweet certify to it and have it forwarded through this office to the Secretary of War. In this have the amount of pay determined on be sufficient to compensate you for services, and at the same time reimburse you for all expenses incurred in the discharge of your duties. This is just and equitable, and will, no doubt, be allowed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. H. LAWRENCE,
Major, Aid-de-Camp.

I. WINSLOW AYER, *Chicago, Ill.*

HEADQUARTERS, POST CAMP DOUGLAS,

Chicago, Ill., January 5, 1865.

MAJOR: The bearer, Mr. Robert Alexander, together with William Hull, come as witnesses against Judge Morris.

Dr. Ayer will come to-morrow night. All will testify that Morris made the most inflammatory speeches in the meetings of the order, and said the camp would be attacked and the prisoners, who were their friends, released, and that the order would make a general uprising against the "God-damned abolitionists."

Dr. Ayer and Mr. Alexander have all along been in our confidence, working without pay, and are reliable in every way.

Please show them every attention which they want.

Yours, very truly,

B. J. SWEET,
Colonel Commanding.

Maj. H. L. BURNETT,
Judge-Advocate, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Affidavit of Brig. Gen. H. E. Paine, commanding the district of Illinois.

District of Columbia, C. C.:

Halbert E. Paine, having been duly sworn, deposes and says as follows:

In the summer of 1864 I was a brigadier-general in command of the district of Illinois, with headquarters at Springfield. Dr. I. Winslow Ayer, then of Chicago, called upon me at Springfield with a letter of introduction, I believe from Governor

Yates, and stated that he had information which convinced him of the existence of a very extensive and formidable conspiracy against the Government by a sworn and secret organization, which included thousands of members in the State of Illinois and in certain other States; that it was well organized and was rapidly gaining in strength; that it had plotted a revolution in the North, the release of the prisoners of war in Camp Douglas and in other Northern prisons, and the pillage of Chicago and other Northern cities. He expressed his confident belief that, if properly sustained by the Government, he would be able to furnish such evidence as would put it in the power of the Federal authorities to frustrate the plans of the organization and break it up. I was at first incredulous, both as to the facts and as to Dr. Ayer's ability to accomplish what he proposed, but he seemed to be an earnest Union man and to rely implicitly upon information which he had obtained respecting the extent and dangerous character of the alleged conspiracy.

He stated that he was a physician and had a lucrative practice in Chicago, but was willing to hazard all his interests and his life in the service of his country; that he would expect to be sustained by the Government and to receive proper recognition for his services, in the form, I believe, of a staff commission in the Army. I intended, in the event of his successful exposure of the alleged conspiracy, to do all in my power to secure a proper reward for his services. I gave him a letter of introduction to Col. B. J. Sweet, commanding the post at Chicago, and requested Dr. Ayer to continue his investigations and to report to Colonel Sweet, to whom I communicated by letter my purpose to exert myself at Washington to secure appropriate recognition and reward for him if his services should prove commensurate with his expectations and promises. I believe that the rescue of the 9,000 prisoners in Camp Douglas and the pillage of Chicago was prevented, and the seizure of large quantities of concealed arms and ammunition and the punishment of the convicted conspirators secured by reason of the timely information furnished by Dr. Ayer.

I observed his course with hearty approval, and subsequently made a written statement, which I now repeat, that the success of said Ayer was complete, and, with my personal knowledge of his services, I find it difficult to overestimate their value and importance to the Government.

No staff appointment has, to my knowledge, been conferred upon Dr. Ayer, nor has he to my knowledge ever received any military rank or title, or any other recognition by the Government for his meritorious and perilous services.

[SEAL.]

H. E. PAINE.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 5th day of October, 1889.

RUTLEDGE MUSARD,
Notary Public.

Affidavit of I. Winslow Ayer.

In addition to the depositions I have hitherto made, I, I. Winslow Ayer, claimant in the case in my favor now pending in Congress, do solemnly swear that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the total expenditures from my own private funds made by me incident to my services from first to last for the General Government, as set forth in the evidence in said case, was at least \$10,000.

The items of expenditures can not be accurately specified, for the reason that the books and papers in which these specifications had been duly recorded were consumed in the great fire in Chicago, Ill., October, 1871.

I further depose and say, that I used funds when needful to best serve the interests of the Government, and only so, and that I accomplished perfectly all I undertook to do, as is attested by my superior officers, witnesses in said case; that the service by its peculiar character was necessarily discretionary with myself as to details, which, among other duties, involved visits to the cities of the entire northern department, as well as New York, Canada, and certain other localities not herein mentioned, and that these duties were both arduous and perilous in the extreme.

To all of which I solemnly swear.

I. WINSLOW AYER, M. D., Claimant.

HESPERIA, OCEANA COUNTY, MICH.,
May 11, 1898.

The party swore to the within before me, a justice of the peace.

H. E. STEBBINS.

Your committee, in view of the foregoing statement of facts, recommend the passage of the bill with the following amendment:

In line 5 strike out "fifty thousand" and insert in lieu thereof "twelve thousand."

